

## THE CALL TO REPENT.

AN ELOQUENT EVANGELIST'S INTERESTING PLEA TO SINNERS.

*Sermon by Rev. Merton Smith, the Scotch Evangelist, at the West Presbyterian Church in St. Louis—A Discourse That Abounds in Effective Stories.*

Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.—Acts iv, 12.

Those that are familiar with the word will remember the setting of the text. Peter and James had gone up into the temple—were going up there to worship—and as they went to the temple called Beautiful there sat a man on the porch who had been lame from his birth. He was carried there in the morning and sat there all day, and his friends carried him back, either volunteering their help or for hire, and he begged from people as they went up into the temple, and as Peter and his companion came past he held out his hands as if he would receive alms from them, and Peter tapped his pocket and felt that it was empty, and they usually were in those days, and he said: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Rise up and walk." And he took hold of his hand, and he helped him up, and as the man received strength in his ankle bones, when he perceived that a miracle had been wrought upon him, he just went leaping and shouting and praising God through the temple, the first Methodist on record. And he had something to shout for. And maybe some of you Presbyterians will become regular Methodists when you have that done for you. You ought to have it done tonight, and you may have it done tonight, please God. Well, when the people saw this they marveled at it greatly.

### The World to Come.

There was a man converted down at the Y. M. C. A., or rather he professed conversion, this afternoon, who was about in the same way, and he is now praising God. And when the men saw this lame man leaping and praising God they said, "What is this?" And as Peter found himself in a crowd, he got up on a stool, perhaps, and commenced to preach to them. And when they found he had been preaching to people of the resurrection from the dead they took him and bound him and carried him before the sanhedrin. There were assembled all the high priests with their relatives. They were having all the high lights of the church up there, and they brought in this poor fellow before that august assembly. There he stood before all those men of intellect, and they asked him: "What have you done? What do you mean by preaching in this way about Jesus of Nazareth?" And then Peter stood up and looked around at all that great assembly, the only men who were supposed to have salvation, the only salvation on earth, right in their paws, and there he was standing—there before the entire ecclesiastism of the day. He was there to tell them of God, to tell them how to get saved.

Now, these people had all the gorgeous finery of their church, they had the altar, and they had the temple and all that, and here was a man in the midst telling them of that business, and that all that business is tomfoolery; that Christ was for them, and there was no salvation in anything else. There are some of you this evening here who need

something of that kind to tell you of the salvation of Christ. It seems to me that there must be ringing a note of warning in every person's ear, "You must be saved, must be saved, must be saved." That is the ringing tone of the text. Death is ahead of us and in front of us, and the Bible says, "After death the judgment." Some people don't believe in the judgment. It has got to be quite fashionable nowadays not to believe there is a judgment. Why, I can't believe in a just God and look at things as they go on around here every day without being convinced that there is a judgment in the world to come.

### The Man in the Turkish Bath.

Now, if you will pardon a personal allusion, I will state to you a little circumstance that happened lately. I happened to go into a Turkish bath establishment and was lying upon a couch in there, when all of a sudden a man came into the apartment of whom I had heard—a Chicago business man who has not a very superior reputation for moral character—and as he came in I said to myself, or rather I said to the Lord, "Lord, what is the message for this man?" I had not spoken to Dives, but was acquainted with the supposed character of that style of man, and as he came past the couch he said, "Whew, it is awful hot in here!" Looking up from my couch, I said, "Yes, it is hot, but it is not near as hot as it will be for some of us." He says, "I suppose you refer to hell." And I said, "Yes." And he replied, "It is a good thing we don't have to believe that." "Did you ever hear what Sam Jones says about that matter?" I inquired. And he said: "No. What does he say?" And I answered, "He says you are all going to be converted five minutes after you get there." Don't laugh now, friends. It is a solemn thing—that many people do not believe in it. They say constantly, "God does not condemn any one." I tell you that is wrong. The time to put yourselves straight before God is now and here. It is a good thing to realize that you have that to do right away. This is a new locality out here, and some people are building houses, and they tell me, "When I have paid for my house and got all those things settled, then I will be in position to become a member of the church and take up my duties in the cause of Christ." Let me give you a text right here tonight: "Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of you." Don't wait a moment. You can't gain anything by putting it off. The time to set yourself right is here and now. Let the house wait a little longer. There is no time like the present for setting yourself right.

### A Duty Neglected.

On one occasion I was invited to dine at Belfast. I was invited to a luxuriously furnished house, and after taking my seat at the table there was a lady presented who was dressed in mourning and who took the seat next to me. In a short time a servant entered the room with a telegram addressed to the lady. Upon reading it she turned pale and retired from the room. I asked the reason of this sudden change and was informed that the telegram contained the announcement that the lady's husband was not expected to live, and, in fact, the doctors had given him up. Later on I was told the history of the lady.

Nineteen years before she had been married to a Scotchman over in Glasgow. They took a solemn vow upon their marriage day that they would go to America and would never rest until they had acquired a fortune. They

came to this country, and by pinching and saving this Scotchman and his wife—and when a Scotchman and wife make up their minds to do a thing they generally get there—acquired their fortune; and it was not a little fortune either—it was a large one. Then they went back and looked about for a home. They bought an estate with a perfect palace on it, and their money fitted it up in an expensive and luxurious manner, and they were ready to settle in it. The first night they went down there to live in the house at midnight there was a scream, and the wife suddenly awoke to find her husband raving mad. "Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee." And for two years that man had been in a Glasgow insane asylum, and she had given up everything—the elegant house and everything—and nursed him, and now this telegram was sent to her to tell her that before she arrived her husband would be lifeless.

### Turned Back by a Trifle.

And that is the way it will be with all of you. There is no time like the present. The only time to be saved is now, tonight. I remember at one time I was in Deadwood, the Black Hills, on my honeymoon—if you will again pardon a personal reminiscence. My wife and I were on our honeymoon and were taking a walk near Leeds City, and as we were walking along I spied a little bridge that ran out into the middle of a small creek, and there it terminated. I wondered at the appearance of the bridge, and as I was looking at it a man came down and spoke to me in regard to the bridge and said that there was a sorrowful story connected with it. I asked him what it was.

"About three or four years ago," he said, "there was a dam placed up above the town which supplied the people with water, and the people over there sent down to us and warned us about it, that it was liable to break, and we all got up on the heights and took everything we could, not knowing at what time it would break, but right over this bridge there was a little island, and there were two men—miners—and the wife of one of the men, who lived in a little cabin there in the center of the creek. They heard the warning, too, and tried to get all their things moved out so that they could save them. Their outfit was not very large, and they soon had nearly all the things up excepting a stove that was left in the house. They consulted about taking the stove up. It was a small one, worth probably \$5 when new and probably worth \$1.50 now, and they consulted about taking the stove up and about the danger of it, and at last they determined to do it. The three of them went down. They had no more than reached the front door before the water was down upon them, and the next day their bodies were found 10 miles down the river." That is the way so many people are brought to the very verge of salvation and some little thing such as that will turn them back.

### No Time to Waste.

Some people do not believe in immediate salvation. I have had ministers talk to me and sneer about it, and they say that it is not a matter of moment, but do you think that a man can taper off from being a thief? It is impossible to do it. A man may steal less and less, but he will still remain a thief. He must be saved instantly. Did you ever think of that? Did you ever think that if he is going to be saved at all he must be saved instantly? There may be a long pause in it, and he may appear all right, but if he does not stop instantly he is a

thief all the same. You have to do it tonight. Right now.

There was once a minister visiting in a neighboring village conducting revival services, and after he had preached two or three nights he noticed a sudden coolness on the platform. He had never felt anything of the kind before, and when he reached the house of the minister he was visiting he said: "What was it that I said today that offended them? I know I said something." The minister replied: "Well, since you have brought the subject up, I will tell you what it was. You asked over 600 of my parishioners to accept salvation right on the spot—offered it to them if they would take it right there—and, sir, I don't believe you have any authority in God's world to do such a thing." So they had it out right there, took down the Bible and dictionary and commentary and textbooks, and they went at it, and while they discussed a man rode up and said, "Mr. Smith has been kicked in the head by a horse, and the doctor says he can't live, and you are to go down there right away before he dies." The minister said to the visiting friend, "You go down and speak to the man." "No," he said, "I won't do that. You go down yourself." At last he said, "I will go on one condition, and that is that you send the message." Then the face of the other minister grew thoughtful, and at last he grew calm and decent, as he ought to have been at first, and he said: "You go and tell him to accept Christ immediately. There is no time to waste."

Now about the ground of salvation. It is not upon works, but it is Jesus Christ—upon his name and no other name. It is quite natural for a man to do something. When he is going to meet a superior, he will go and wash his face and hands and try to look nice; and so a man when he appears before God wants to be looking right. But that is not the thing. When you want to be saved, you must come to him just as you are.

### The Repentant Woman.

Take another case. Out in the city of Capernaum I see a beautifully dressed woman walking down the street. She was fair to look upon, but her character is unmentionable, and as she moves down the street there is a crowd on the opposite side. She looks at it and wonders what it is. With a woman's curiosity she determines to find out and crosses the street, although it was not exactly the thing for a woman to be found in a crowd of men, but she goes forward and notices the men, and standing up on tiptoes she looks over their shoulders, and her lips curl contemptuously. It was a street preacher. She hears the words floating out to her, and by and by a sentence comes to her. It may have been something like "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the harlots and publicans will enter the gates of heaven before you." I have no doubt that the sentence interested her. It may have stopped her—at any rate she was stopped. She drew to one side and became interested, and then she began gently pushing this man and that man aside until she came in the presence of Peter and James and heard the one that was speaking, and she saw that it was Jesus of Nazareth preaching, and then she just put her hands in gently and pushed her way up and stood face to face with him. Oh, what a day was that! It stopped that woman in her course, and she turned. She went back to her home, disappeared subdued and a wholly changed woman. She passed out of the crowd, and when she reached her home got rid of all her goods, dismissed